TALENTS INQUIRY AND STRENGTHS SCAN EXERCISE

It's crucial that you know your strengths – the key skills, abilities, and behaviors that you use well in your work. Ask others for feedback to help you identify your strengths.

STRENGTHS SCAN

- Ask 5 friends, family members, supervisors (former or current), career mentors, and/or co-workers (former or current) to tell you what they think are your strengths and talents, your most positive or special qualities, and your best personal characteristics.
- If possible, try to include people who know you from different times and contexts of your life and include people in at least the following categories: family member(s), friend(s), co-worker(s).
- It is best to ask them to provide this to you in written form so that you can compare the responses and see patterns.
- Once you have their responses, summarize the themes you see among them.
- Some possible questions to ask:
    1. *What are my standout strengths? (Very few others are as good as I am.)*
    2. *What are my moderate strengths? (I'm good – so are many others.)*
    3. *How would people describe me?*
    4. *What are my overdone strengths? (Things I'm good at, but not interested in using – I'm going to burnout if I keep focusing on these.)*
    5. *What are two skills I should strengthen? How would it help me, given what I want to do?*

TALENTS INQUIRY

1. Make a list of everything that comes naturally to you – things for which you seem to have a "knack".
    - Include work-related and non-work-related things in your list. Sometimes talents are those things that we consider fun and not "work", even if we do them in a work-related context.
    - Don't include those things where you think you have developed a skill, but have no real natural talent.
    - Think about times when you are in *flow* – when you lose track of time because you are enjoying what you are doing. These might be times that hold clues as to your talents.

2. Make another list of everything you are not naturally good at.
    - Doing this will help you clarify what your talents are by knowing what they are not.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Write a “Talents and Strengths” profile of yourself based on the information you gathered from the Strengths Scan and your Talents Inquiry process.
- As you write, describe your strengths and talents *in action*. Use examples from your work and life history.
- Share this with others as a way to refine your understanding of the information. For example, you may share it with your supervisor in a discussion about your work goals and the kinds of experiences and responsibilities you’d like to take on. Or you may share it with your support group as a way of getting clarity about the kind of work that you are best suited for and as a way to prepare for job interviews.

Exercise courtesy of UC Berkeley Human Resources

Are you Career Fit?

"Career Fitness" means taking steps toward a healthy career throughout your worklife.

Your answers to the following questions may provide you with some important information about your personal career fitness level.

	YES	NO
1. I know my strengths in the workplace and what gives me career satisfaction.	☐	☐
2. For each of my job-related experiences, I can list several contributions I made or things I accomplished.	☐	☐
3. I know my weaknesses and/or blind spots and have developed methods for improvement.	☐	☐
4. I have identified some of my most important work-related values (e.g., prestige, security, variety).	☐	☐
5. I have discovered what kinds of rewards are important to me in a job (e.g., social, monetary, professional development).	☐	☐
6. I can describe the characteristics of the work environment in which I would feel happiest and most productive.	☐	☐
7. I have benchmarked my skills against market trends.	☐	☐
8. I have developed a list of career possibilities to explore and research for future career options.	☐	☐
9. I read current literature for trends in my field.	☐	☐
10. I stay current with administrative changes in my organization.	☐	☐
11. I have attended an event in the past year to learn more about my current field or fields I might explore.	☐	☐
12. I pursue a variety of opportunities to upgrade my skills and keep pace with my field.	☐	☐
13. I have identified additional skills I would like to develop and where I can receive that training.	☐	☐
14. I have volunteered for a new team or project in the past year.	☐	☐
15. I have joined and become active in a professional association to enhance my job awareness and management skills.	☐	☐
16. I have participated in an interest group, advisory committee or other group at work.	☐	☐
17. I maintain a written Individual Development Plan (IDP) that addresses my short- and mid-term goals.	☐	☐
18. I have identified career action steps to take in the next six to twelve months.	☐	☐
19. I can clearly state my career goals.	☐	☐

20. I have an up-to-date resume.	☐	☐
21. I have considered ways to develop job leads and explore other job opportunities.	☐	☐
22. I have conducted an informational interview in the past year.	☐	☐
23. I have developed a list of professional resources.	☐	☐
24. I have practiced my interviewing techniques and am prepared to answer the most commonly asked interview questions	☐	☐
25. I know what a behavioral interview is and how to answer behavioral questions.	☐	☐
26. I look ahead to assess organizational and industry trends	☐	☐
27. I actively seek feedback and mentoring from others.	☐	☐
28. I establish new work contacts both within and outside of my organization.	☐	☐
29. I anticipate change in my work environment and can adapt quickly to change in my organization.	☐	☐
Total	____	____

Count the number of "yes" answers:

22-29 Congratulations! Your career fitness shows! You've been working your career management program. Keep up the good work.

13-21 You are moving in the right direction, but you may need to keep yourself on track. Consider taking a career management workshop to increase your career fitness level. Explore the UC Davis Career Management Tookit (http://www.hr.ucdavis.edu/sdps/career-management-toolkit)

Less than 13 Now is a good time to start or update an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Begin by using the exercises in this toolkit to get started. You might want to consider talking with a career counselor. Explore the UC Davis Career Management Tookit (http://www.hr.ucdavis.edu/sdps/career-management-toolkit)

Courtesy of UC Davis Human Resources

(Adapted from the former Career Action Center)

Values Survey

Rate the degree of importance that the values on the following list have for you. Use the following to rate the importance:

- Place a "1" next to those that are important to you in your personal and professional life.
- Place a "2" next to the values that are reasonably important.
- Place a "3" next to the values that are unimportant to you.

_____ **Accomplishment** - feeling that you have contributed to your work and to your world

_____ **Affiliation** - being active or involved with a group of people, perhaps in a club, professional organization, community group or special interest team

_____ **Belonging** - feeling wanted and needed by family and/or friends

_____ **Challenge** - feeling personally and professionally challenged by your work

_____ **Change/Variety** - having a job which has a reasonable amount of variety or different responsibilities

_____ **Compatibility** - having good relationships with leaders, colleagues and others that you come into contact with at work

_____ **Competence** - doing your work correctly, accurately and with ability

_____ **Competition** - doing a job which matches your skills and abilities against those of other people

_____ **Communication** - expressing your ideas, feelings, and concerns accurately to others

_____ **Creativity** - creating new products, materials, services and/or systems; generating new ideas and implementing them

_____ **Development** - working on self-improvement

_____ **Diversity** - having the opportunity to meet and/or work with people with diverse cultural backgrounds

_____ **Flexibility** – scheduling your work hours or the way you conduct your work

_____ **Growth** - being with people who are stimulating and challenging, providing an opportunity to develop your own skills and abilities

_____ **Health** - living a physically healthy life; exercising, eating properly, taking care of yourself

_____ **Helping** - being involved in activities which offer assistance to others

_____ **Humor** – ability to see that something is funny; enjoyment of things that are funny

_____ **Increasing Income** - obtaining promotions or opportunities to increase income

_____ **Independence** - determining your own activities and priorities with little direction from others

_____ **Influence** - being able to influence other people

_____ **Impact** - being able to help, guide and/or direct people, organizations or projects

_____ **Interaction** - working predominantly with others

_____ **Insight** - learning to accept yourself and your strengths and weaknesses

_____ **Knowledge** - pursuing and expanding your field of knowledge

_____ **Leadership** - managing or influencing the efforts of others

_____ **Learning** - knowing that you are growing intellectually

_____ **Making a Difference** – contributing to efforts that benefit others

_____ **Physical** - doing work in which coordination and physical activities are desired or required

_____ **Power and authority** - directing or controlling the activities of others

_____ **Problem-Solving** - using problem solving skills and generating solutions

_____ **Recognition** - having a large circle of colleagues; being known by a number of people

_____ **Respect** - being respected by others, your colleagues, management and clients

_____ **Security** - knowing that position is secure (not identified for reorganization or layoff)

_____ **Social** - having regular or daily contact with other people

_____ **Solitude** - working predominantly on your own

_____ **Spiritual** - being true to your personal convictions

_____ **Spontaneity** - feeling you can be flexible when desired; not feeling restricted

_____ **Supervision** - supervising the efforts of others

_____ **Support** - having colleagues with whom you can confide, share concerns, trust and support

_____ **Teamwork** – encouraging cooperation, collaboration and partnerships

_____ **WorkLife and Wellness** – pursuing interests both within and outside of work

_____ Other values not mentioned above

. _____

. _____

. _____

Values Summary

As you review this list of values, identify UP TO 10 values that you rated with a "1." If you have more than 10, go back through all the "1"s and select your top 10. If fewer, you might want to review your number "2"s and add them to the list.

My Top Ten Values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Think about and write some statements that show how your top values are demonstrated in your work.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What top values are missing in your work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are those related to ideas, people, data or things. To determine your strongest functional skills, review the list of skills below. Place an "x" next to the skills in which you feel you are competent. Then, list below the top five that you believe are your greatest strengths. Place an asterisk by the checked skills you enjoy using most. Put a "+" by the skills in which you would like to become more proficient.

___achieving
___administering
___advising
___analyzing
___anticipating
___appraising
___arranging
___assembling
___attaining
___auditing
___budgeting
___calculating
___classifying
___coaching
___collecting
___communicating
___communicating orally
___compiling data
___conceptualizing
___constructing objects
___consulting
___controlling
___coordinating
___corresponding
___counseling
___ creating
___cultivating
___dealing with pressure
___dealing with unknowns
___deciding
___delegating
___designing products/systems
___developing math models
___dispensing
___displaying
___distributing
___dramatizing
___editing
___encouraging
___enduring
___entertaining
___estimating
___evaluating
___examining
___exhibiting
___explaining
___finding
___forecasting
___formulating
___fund-raising
___generalizing
___group facilitating
___handling complaints
___handling detail work
___identifying problems
___implementing
___improving
___inspecting
___interpreting
___interviewing
___investigating
___judging
___leading
___listening
___making layouts
___managing
___mapping
___marketing/selling
___measuring
___mediating
___meeting the public
___monitoring
___motivating
___moving with dexterity
___negotiating
___observing
___obtaining information
___operating
___performing under stress
___persuading
___planning
___predicting
___preparing
___problem solving
___processing
___programming
___promoting
___proposal writing
___protecting
___questioning
___reading
___recording
___recruiting
___rehabilitating
___remembering
___repairing
___repeating
___reporting
___representing
___researching
___reviewing
___rewriting
___self-understanding
___selling
___setting goals
___sketching
___supervising
___synthesizing
___talking
___teaching
___team building
___timing
___training
___treating
___trouble-shooting
___updating
___using instruments
___working with precision
___writing
___ (add your own)

List your FIVE strongest functional skills:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Job-Specific Skills Assessment

What are the top three to five job-specific skills you would like to use in your next position?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

What are the top three to five job-specific skills you would like to develop in your next position or for a future career?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Self-Management Skills

Self-management skills are the skills that seem natural and make you unique. People often fail to identify these as skills or give themselves credit for using them, yet they impact professional identity, the work that is done and the way that it is done. Self-management skills are also considered professional and personal traits. Examples include being flexible, creative and resourceful or a team player.

To help you sharpen your focus on who you are, work through this checklist of personal characteristics. First, read each word and place an "x" next to the ones that describe you as you are now. Then, look back over the list and list below the five words that are most highly descriptive of you. To prepare for your next role or future career, place a "+" next to the top three to five self-management skills you wish to develop further.

____ academic
____ accurate
____ active
____ adaptable
____ ambitious
____ assertive
____ astute
____ attractive
____ broadminded
____ calm
____ candid
____ capable
____ caring
____ clear-thinking
____ clever
____ competent
____ competitive
____ confident
____ conscientious
____ conservative
____ considerate
____ cooperative
____ courageous
____ creative
____ curious
____ deliberate
____ democratic
____ determined
____ dignified
____ diligent
____ diplomatic
____ discreet
____ dynamic
____ eager
____ easygoing
____ effective
____ efficient
____ empathetic
____ energetic
____ enthusiastic
____ expressive
____ fair-minded
____ firm
____ flexible
____ frank
____ friendly
____ generous
____ gentle
____ helpful
____ honest
____ humorous
____ idealistic
____ imaginative
____ independent
____ industrious
____ initiator
____ innovative
____ intelligent
____ inventive
____ kind
____ light-hearted
____ logical
____ loyal
____ mature
____ modest
____ objective
____ open
____ open-minded
____ optimistic
____ orderly
____ organized
____ original
____ outgoing
____ patient
____ perceptive
____ persevering
____ persistent
____ pleasant
____ poised
____ polite
____ practical
____ precise
____ professional
____ progressive
____ punctual
____ quick
____ quiet
____ rational
____ realistic
____ receptive
____ reflective
____ reliable
____ reserved
____ resourceful
____ responsible
____ risk taker
____ self-confident
____ self-controlled
____ sensible
____ sensitive
____ serious
____ sincere
____ sophisticated
____ successful
____ tactful
____ talented
____ tenacious
____ tidy
____ tolerant
____ versatile
____ warm

List your FIVE strongest self-management skills:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____